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Contribution to Bout Me Healing

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Researcher-Administered Surveys

How surveys are conducted in addiction recovery research can affect the accuracy of data, how comfortable participants feel, and how reliable responses are. For example, participants might feel safer sharing sensitive information about relapse in certain survey formats (AAPOR, n.d.). In person surveys help researchers connect with participants and notice nonverbal signals, such as hesitation, or nervousness, which can help to see clues about sensitive topics such as relapse (AAPOR, n.d.). For example, if a person pauses or avoids eye contact when asked about cravings, the interviewer can clarify or rephrase the question to make sure the answer is accurate about the participants experience (AAPOR, n.d.). However, this method can also show social desirability bias, where participants answer in ways they think are expected, and this can be more costly and time-consuming due to scheduling and travel needs (Hillmer, 2024). In person surveys can lead to participants giving answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear, especially on substance use topics, these surveys take more time and resources because of schedule and traveling (Hillmer, 2024).

On the other hand, telephone surveys helps researchers to contact people in different locations at a lower cost. For example, participants from different recovery programs in different states can join without traveling, which can also increase participation (Allen at el, 2025). Telephone surveys can help participants feel less judged than in person interviews, which can

help the person to be more honest about struggles, like emotional stress or relapse triggers (Allen et al, 2025). On the downside, telephone surveys can make it harder to explain complicated questions, and researchers might not visually see nonverbal cues, which can limit the detail of responses (Allen et al., 2025).

A peer-reviewed study by Allen et al. (2025) found that telephone interviews are usually faster and cheaper, while in person interviews are more detailed answers, which help to see subtle behaviors or emotions that can influence recovery patterns. Anthony et al. (2025) also found that people are more open to interviews when they feel comfortable and private, whether in person or online, which is important when discussing addiction recovery. Although theses studies show differences in time, cost, and response detail, they did not look at how a participant's emotional state in recovery might influence feeling safe in sharing personal experiences. For example, someone in early recovery might feel anxious or ashamed about relapse, which can affect their answers (Hillmer, 2024). Knowing these details helps researchers create surveys that are easy for participants to access, make them feel comfortable, and ensure accurate results. For example, choosing the right survey mode and question wording can help reduce mistakes and bias, while expressing important information about relapse triggers and coping methods in addiction recovery (AAPOR, n.d.).

References

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